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PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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SOUL-STATISTICS.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen."—2 PET. iii., 18.

That man's duty leads him to active exertion, and that there is a reason why he should forget himself in order that he may well perform his work, is not to be denied. There is a self-consciousness, and there is a self-culture accompanied with self-consciousness, which has an unmanly element in it. There may be, therefore, a growth, substantial in some respects, which carries with it imperfections, and augmentations of them, which are almost equivalents, putting weakness in equivalency with strength.

But while we distinguish the fact, and set it apart for reprehension and avoidance, that men may by self-consciousness fail, on the other hand there may be an unmanliness in the almost entire loss of one's consciousness of character and condition. While men are producing effects, as actors, upon matter, and upon other men in communities, and are absorbed in that work, there is a compound result; for, as the tool graves the picture, and is itself worn in the doing it, so man, the actor, is producing results not only exterior to himself, but also interior, and is changed by the changes he produces.

There is, therefore, a good and sufficient reason why the universal producer of effects, why that being more than any other within the range of our knowledge whose peculiarity is the power of developing comprehensive products, resulting from the complications of causes, should, while thus widely acting and changing, form, at proper times, and in proper ways, a judgment of his own self, and of what activity has

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done, not exterior to him, but in him. For the greatest results in a man's nature and character are not those which he sets out to produce. That which is, after all, most thoroughly done, in us, is that which is unconsciously done. Not the things which we aim at, seeking them by prayer, nor those things which we gain under the direct impulse of volition, are the most numerous, or the most important; but that which time does, that which the attrition of myriad men round about us does, that which we receive in ourselves when acting in right lines, and by right instruments; that which we incidentally receive; the incidental result of thinking rightly, and planning rightly, and acting rightly. The reactions of these things are invisible means of grace.

So that, without undervaluing, in any way, nay, recognizing the transcendent importance of voluntary endeavor, admitting that we are reprehensible for the want of it, I still affirm that not the things which we intend to do, half so much as the things which, without our consciousness or recognition, are working around us, and in us, and upon us, change, elaborate and finally settle character and destiny.

The importance of these considerations respecting Christian character can hardly be overestimated. It shows the necessity which lies upon us of ascertaining our condition from time to time—of ascertaining where we are, what are the real proportions of our nature, how the different parts of the soul stand related to each other, how we stand related to our fellow-men, and how we stand equipped for the other life.

Even worldly men in worldly things admit the wisdom of every man's knowing his exact condition as to property. He is shiftless and careless who does not know how he stands. Men take the same measure of their influence and power, and know about what they are, and what they are competent to. Our standing in society is a matter to which from time to time we give consideration, but in a Christian the examination of the condition of his conscience, his moral sense, his faith, his hope, his whole inward soul-life, his relations to man, to time, and to eternity, assumes an importance compared with which all secular estimates are as shadows.

Now, men fall short of just judgments about their condition by a kind of superficial, and often a wholly artificial, way of examining themselves. No man can examine himself rightly concerning his condition as a Christian man who does not know what Christianity is. No man can be expected to know what his estate is who does not know what his estate ought to be. There are very many, therefore, who, in examining into their condition, as to whether they are safe, as to whether they have grown or ought to grow, or as to where growth should be, look at themselves externally almost entirely. Surely, if a man believes that salvation is a gift of God in any such sense as that it absolves him from the necessity of having, of earning, morality; if he believes that it is a gift of God in such a sense that it despises or overlooks moral quality, and that men are saved, no matter what they are, why, then he has only to ask, "Which is the true church? What minister has the power of exempting me from penalty? What are the conditions which I am to fulfill?" And then he ciphers it out and says, "I have complied with the conditions, and I am safe." A church which is a life insurance policy of course would give a kind of perfunctory test. Men who take care of themselves on Sunday; men who go to church as many times as is required; men who pay their tithes; men who perform the varied duties that are laid upon them, say, "Well, what lack I yet?" I need not say that a man may go through the whole round of imposed service in the church and yet come short, according to the declaration of the apostle when he said that a man might have all knowledge, and all faith so as to perform miracles, and might be kind and generous so that he gave his goods to the poor, nay, though he might have such transcendent emotion as to give his very body to martyrdom, yet if he had not the soul-quality of love he would be nothing. A man may go through every churchly service and yet he may be nothing.

We should examine ourselves, therefore, not by the exterior, but by some better comprehension of what Christian life is.

Then, men often examine their condition by mutual com-

parisons. Very natural, but very mischievous, this is. That is to say, there is a kind of average requisition; and if a man lives about as the majority live in religious matters, he deems himself safe. Men indulge in a strange kind of reasoning—namely, "If all in this world who call themselves Christians are safe, why then I am safe." As if a man in the midst of comparative penury should go into a community where poor men predominated, and should say, "If all this great mass of people, if the thousands around about me, are well enough off, why then I am well enough off." If the scale be low, and if the man is up to that, he is satisfied. He is satisfied by any such measurement of himself with the community in which he lives. By such tests as these men measure themselves among themselves, compare themselves with themselves, and are by inspiration pronounced to be *not wise.*

Then, a great many judge of their religious condition by their susceptibility to religious excitement—a test that certainly has its uses; but eminently its abuses also. It is exceedingly imperfect; because susceptibility is very much a matter of organization. He that has a largely organized system will be very apt to be sensitive to all impressions, whatever they may be: a mere susceptibility, quickness, does not necessarily come from growth. It may, and it may not. Many and many are the men that respond very quickly to appeal, but have very little stability; indeed, this very quickness of susceptibility is one of the elements in our Master's parable, where the seed that was sown, not having much earth, sprang up the quicker, because it felt the sun sooner, and died quick because it had very little nourishment at the root; and common observation shows that men who respond quick, whose feelings outrun their judgments often, and are not based upon great purposes solidified into habits, oftentimes, feeling quick, weeping quick, rejoicing quick, are quickly over their feelings, or settle down into a steady life far below what the indication was.

So, the susceptibility to feeling is no index of a man's moral condition. Now, what is the grand criterion in this matter? On what grounds are we to judge of our condition as Christian men and Christian women? Have we grown

any since we entered the Christian life? If we are growing, at what stage of growth are we? If we are bearing fruit, what is the condition of the fruit? Are we ripening? If we are, are we ripening all over, and all through? These are the questions which one should propose to himself—not simply the external questions of propriety of conduct and morality; not simply the questions of general adhesion to a religious direction or tendency; but personal questions. "How is it with me?" every man should ask himself; for every man sails for the kingdom of God out of the harbor of his own soul; and religion means something personal and different in each individual man. Though there are great generic elements in religion, yet the religious question with each man is as to the transformation of his nature from a lower form to a higher form; and his own nature—its peculiarities, originally and inherently; his education; his occupation; his difficulties; his temptations and trials and burdens; his joys and sorrows—these all go to make every man supremely individual, and so unlike every other man that, while all men are united by certain generalities, they are, after all, specialized, and no two men begin alike, progress alike, or are alike. Every man must determine the question of his salvableness, or of his approaches to a higher state of Christian character, for himself; and the most that can be done is to point out some of those religious grounds and views by which each man may be able to determine for himself.

We are not called, then, simply to be good worldly men: we are called to that; but we are called to more—we are, as Christian men, called to observe all natural law (that is, material law, using it in that sense), and ordinary social law; and it is sometimes said that that man is a perfect man who observes all the laws of his special condition. If anybody takes any comfort in such an interpretation as that, let him; for it throws but little light on the matter to me to say that a man is perfect who observes all the laws of his special condition. It is true that such a man fulfills the measure of duty; but that phrase does not interpret this subject.

We are brought into the world as into a school—as into a place of education, of unfolding. We are to observe the laws of the material globe; we are to observe all social laws; we are to observe the special, personal laws which environ us or take hold upon us for the sake of the great end of our being—namely, that we may be transformed by the renewing of our souls or minds, and may become heritors of eternal life.

We are not born, therefore, to have our summer here, and then, with folded wing like the butterfly, to be annihilated. We come into life with the great machinery of the world and of society, and with the operation of the divine Spirit upon our personal selves, upon our souls, that by these we may be carried up, and that we may grow until we come to that state in which the transfer is possible, and that we may be lifted up into a higher and nobler sphere of existence. It is the grand aim of human life to prepare a man, by the faithful discharge of relative duties, to act in a higher sphere with nobler surroundings, and with a better society—the spirits of the just made perfect. This is the grand criterion; and every man is to judge of himself. He is to ask himself, "What state of preparation have I reached in my unfolding? What are the statistics of my soul? What are the conditions out of which I have hope, and out of which I perceive rising in the eternal sphere a nobler life?"

The first step, therefore, which every man should consider with himself is the entirety of the moral purpose in him; the preparation of the whole manhood for a nobler existence—the end of life. Is this purpose as full, as strong, as it was in the begining of your Christian life? Yea, is it stronger, and is it increasing in intensity as years go on? Is the need of succor and help, of constant watchfulness and activity, of preparation and of the means of grace, to lift yourselves above the flesh and above the spirit of this world; is the whole sense of Christian duty for these high ends—is that with you as strong as it was in the beginning? Is it stronger? Does it grow year by year?

A man is called (suitably endowed) to art; for in art as in every thing else, many are called and few are chosen; but

if one be called and chosen, and if he enter upon the school of art, while the novelty is upon him, when breaking away from domesticity and becoming a pupil in that school, all is fresh, all is new, and it seems to him afterwards as though the purpose of his life to be an artist was stronger then than it has ever been at any other time; but it was probably weaker. He was more conscious of it, but a purpose that embodies itself and becomes unconscious is stronger than a purpose which is kept in operation by special volition all the time. He who is obliged every day, going out in the street, to say, "I will be honest," is not so honest a man as he who never thinks of it, and is honest without thinking of it. In other words, he who works out a purpose, as it were, into organic forms, so that it is spontaneous, and he is unconscious of it—he has a breadth of purpose which the man has not who is obliged to minister to his purpose by thought. He who goes into merchandise, or science, or any profession, thinking, "I will pursue such and such a line of life," and holds himself up to it, becomes stronger, and his purpose becomes more real.

Now, in the Christian life, he who is obliged to refresh himself as with a novelty, rubbing bright an old thing; he who is obliged to say to himself, "I have entered upon a career that has for its object nothing less than the transformation of my whole interior life; I am entering upon the purpose of being a son of God, and of being worthy of that name in the other life, whatever may be the imperfections of this;" he who is obliged, now and then, to call to mind that for which he is striving; he who is obliged to take what is called his "hope," and rake it up as one does the embers of an unused fire-place, going back on Sunday, pulling open these embers to see where his hope is, and kindling a little fire for a day, and raking them up again; he that is obliged to stimulate himself, and minister to himself, by saying, "I am going to live a Christian life"—he is, comparatively speaking, in the lower forms of development. A man's purpose to live Christianly should become so constant that he almost ceases to think of it as such. Then, whatever may be your life, wherever it may be cast—whether in the pleasures

of refined art, or in the strife which fortune requires—all these things are but the fulfillment of the sovereign purpose, which is higher and beyond every thing else, "I am carving in myself a man that is to be. I am a man. I am an animal; but it is an animal being fashioned into a man. I have lower desires and tendencies; but I am a man. I am of this or that or the other profession; but whatever I am, it is for the sake of that which is transcendently more than any profession—perfect manhood. It is not a manhood which comes from the popular sentiments or the heroic endeavors or examples which poetry and history give us; it is a manhood in Christ Jesus. It is the power of manhood in faith; the power of manhood in love; the power of meekness; the power of humility; the power of self-sacrifice. It is a transcendent element in human character. It is a conception made regnant and radiant." This is that ideal which the man has for himself. Come joy, come sorrow, come weal, come woe, come summer, come winter, come poverty, come wealth, all these things are subsidiary, subservient to this manhood. It is a manhood which does not live in the workshop of the soul. There is this conception perpetually: "I am to live by the grace of God, and I shall live again. This body of death is enough for one world: by the grace of God I will gain a victory over it perfectly. I will be transformed by the renewing of my soul, by growth, by building, by refinement. I will outlive the simple measures and powers of this mortal manhood, and I will be a man before God—in the glory of the eternal world and amidst angel bands I will not be ashamed to lift up my head!"

Now this purpose of living for a nobler state of being is one of the tokens and signs which a man should perpetually apply to himself: "I am growing in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." What is the whole drift and direction of the soul? What is the one ambition which, though it may include in it and under it other ambitions, yet has this comprehensive one? "Is it Christ in me, the hope of glory? Do I put my reason to that discipline? Do I restrain all my lordly passions, and do I shape all my impulses, by that one supreme ambition?"

If I be a merchant, I make everything bend to merchandise for the purpose of amassing wealth; if I be a politician, I make everything bend to my ambition for influence and power in that direction; if I be a military man I make all the elements of life and society bend toward the object of a military career; but if I be a Christian man, I may be any of a hundred things, in mechanics, in the work-shop, in the store, on the ship, in every sphere of life; yet here is the one great end which I have in view—a nobler, diviner manhood, to be wrought out from the materials which God gave me at my birth.

Now, what is your condition? Have you been so occupied by taking care of yourself and your family that you really have not had time to think about your soul? You hope that it is going to come out right in the end; but what that coming out is to be you do not know exactly. Is that your style of piety? Or, do you say to yourself, "Well, I don't trouble myself about the future. I have an impression that if a man does about as well as he knows how in life he will get along as well as he needs to"? Is that your slipshod way? It is as if a man should say, "I am going to follow in the track of Michael Angelo. He was a mighty worker in clay and marble; and I am going to be like him. I am going to have my materials and am going to make something. I do not know what it will be. I will put on, and put on, and put on the clay, and I hope I shall get something about as good as he did." What sort of a statue will a man make who goes to work hap-hazard and attempts to make, he does not know what?

You that smile when I speak of using the clay thus for the purpose of shaping a statue of some hero, and to whom that is ludicrous, must see how much more excessively ludicrous it would be, if it were not so foolish, for a man to take all the subtle elements of reason and imagination, the whole realm and swarm of higher and multitudinous thoughts which spark out of the chimney of life, all the lordly passions which are found in the sphere below, and say, "I do about as well as I can, and about as well as the average public sentiment requires; and I hope all will come out right." Come out!

What sort of a coming out will it be? It is as if one should throw mud against a wall, and then look to see what he had made. Men cast themselves wildly against the battlements of heaven, and hope that it will come out right!

Not only is there to be this entirety and continuous distinctness of the moral purpose of manhood in Christ Jesus as the dominant idea of life, maintained in its sovereignty; but another ground of examination should take in the question of sovereignty within the soul itself. We are told by Paul, as plainly as if he had been with Darwin, that a man is sent into this world riding on an animal; that there is a spirit-man and a flesh-man; that the two are at variance; that they quarrel with each other; that one or the other of them must go under; and that is the point at which divine grace and succor come in—where, gasping, wearied and often baffled, the spirit-man, finding little succor in the circumstances about him, says, "That is the ideal; that is the beauty; that is the truth; that is the right virtue. I see the good, but I pursue the evil. When I would do good, the serpent rises under me, or the swine in me lifts itself up, or the lion's or tiger's paw is in me. When I—*I*, the spirit-man, the soul-man, full of all affections and purities and virtues and sweetnesses and fruits of another clime bearing seed—when I would do good, these things are striving in me. Then there is another man that comes up under, and snatches down the vine so that it shall not bear the impurpled cluster; and the charm is broken; and down I am cast into the lower realm. Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body—this dead body—this worse than dead body—this body of death—and open to me the high, the generous, the disinterested, the sweet, the pure, the spiritual and divine?" That is the conflict of life.

Now, there are very many men who have a great deal of generosity and benevolence and magnanimity, and I see that pride takes them as if they were so many steeds; they are brought out of the soul's stable and harnessed: and here sits Pride riding and driving them. The divine elements are his horses. I see men who have great wit, a great deal of good nature, much genial social influence; these are the higher

traits and tendencies in them; but lust gets hold of them; and I behold that imagination and the brilliant qualities of disposition are all harnessed behind the most hateful lust; and the moral qualities are the servants, the horses, the steeds, as it were, that draw it. And in ordinary life we find that men cultivate the things that have a hard temper and a cutting edge, and say, "I have got to be rude with rude men; when I am with Romans I have got to do as Romans do; when men are selfish, harsh and cruel, I have got to be selfish, harsh and cruel: somebody will do it if I do not; and I might as well do it and have the advantage of it. It is not worth while to stand on one's generosity. Of course a man ought to be honest when it does not cost him anything; of course a man ought to tell the truth when it is not prejudicial to his own interest; but no man ought to stand in his own light." In that way men are taught to put their moral qualities under, and at the bottom, and to drive them as if they were the servants of the lower propensities; and the conflict is as to which of the two sides of man's nature shall be at the top, and which shall be at the bottom. And when that which is angelic and divine in man, the clarity of the reason, the highest impulses of divine wisdom, faith in truth, faith in justice, faith in kindness, faith in forbearance, faith in forgiveness, faith in hope, cheer and love—when these attempt to legislate life, to mark out a man's business for him, to direct his paths for him, do you suppose it is done without rebellion?

An old man (I will not mention his name, because almost always there are Hoosiers here) who lived on the Big Miami Bottoms when I was there was worth his half million dollars, it was said. He lived in a rattling old cabin. I think the first story the hogs had, and the upper story he had. When they, of a winter's night, by their squealing and quarreling interrupted him, he would kick away a board that covered a hole in the loose floor and halloa down to them, and would sometimes throw things down at them; and when a momentary quiet had been restored, he would push back the board, and eat or sleep as the case might be.

There are a great many men who are just like him. All

the under story, the whole ground level, is filled with swine; and when they make an uproar which disturbs the occupant in the upper story they are checked a little, but they are never changed, and they are swine still. There are multitudes of men who, in emergencies, on special occasions, and for a selfish or ambitious purpose, compel pride and cruelty to conduct themselves properly; but how many men are there who, being conscious of their strong basilar appetites and passions, have set about saying to these, "You shall each of you, and every one of you, render service to that which is highest in me. I will borrow your power; I will take your pluck and courage; I will avail myself of your indomitable perseverance; I will use all that which makes the world easy of management; but I will employ these things that they may be a stimulus to reason, to moral sense, to that which is best and noblest in me. I will rule my under man by the power of the upper man that is in me!" How many of you can bear testimony that, being strong in your lower nature, you have, by the grace of God, subdued the under man, and gained control of the appetites and passions, and put an end to all their sensual courses? How many of you can say, "By the grace of God I have so far overcome these lower propensities as that I can sincerely declare, 'I am the master of my own soul'"?

There is a ground for examination. Have you weakened your appetites and passions? Have you gained any control of them? Can you make them at all cease their roaring? Can you control them to higher purposes? What is the state of things with you in this respect compared with what it was twenty years ago?

Now, I have said that nature helps grace—that is, taking *nature*, not in a degraded theological sense, but in its highest sense, as the result of God's intent and God's actual workmanship—for time does essentially weaken many physical traits; labor, severe and long continued, takes the fever from many a passion and appetite: but after all, the conflict lies between grace and passion; between the Spirit of God working mightily in the soul, and the spirit of selfishness that inheres in the lower nature of man. I do not ask you

whether you rejoice on Sunday. You must be a very bad man if, on such a Sunday morning as this, you do not think things are beautiful. The sky over your head; the many serene and deep thoughts that come you know not whence, and lift you, you know not whither nor how far; the horizon so near; that great roaring city, that old dragon, that during the week neither day nor night is still, hushed and quiet — what must you be if these things do not affect you? You are at home, the household is orderly; you walk the streets in your best apparel, as is fit; and you come here among those whom it is always a pleasure for you to meet; and strange it would be if the Sabbath day were not a delight and honorable to you. And, so far as it goes, it is an evidence that you are growing in grace, that the Sabbath is not a weariness to you, and a burden.

But how far is that? What is your condition when you are under provocation to-morrow? What is your condition when there is rivalry between you and another, and he is determined to strike you down? Is the influence within you in favor of pride and resentment, or of forbearance and humility? Is the impulse of your lower nature, or is the impulse of your higher nature, strongest? How is it in the whole play of your life? What is the history of your soul as regards motives? Do you act from a higher class of motives than you did twenty years ago? Is your better nature increasing in power and fineness? Are you conscious that you are gaining a victory of the upper man over the under man? Do you realize that you are being delivered from the dominion of your appetites and passions? And do you feel that this is a strife which you have entered upon for life? Can you bear this testimony: "By the grace of God I have learned to hold my tongue"? Now sing a hallelujah to that. It is worth one or two. Can you say, "By the grace of God I have learned not to think more highly of myself than I ought to think"? Sing ten hallelujahs to that. It is a Waterloo. There was never another like it. Can you say, "I used to be narrow and close; I could not bear to give away anything; but I have so far overcome my feeling in this respect that I experience a very genuine and

sincere pleasure in the things which I give away; and I am learning to live for others"? Sing twenty hallelujahs; for when selfishness goes out of your soul you are not far from the kingdom of God.

Come, what is your evidence of growth in grace? "Well, I think I never enjoyed revival meetings as much as I do now." But how about your groceries, your weights and measures, and your adulterations? How about the ten thousand quips and quirks in life by which men seek to cheat each other? How about your relations to your neighbor? How about your temper in the household? What does your wife think? Does she think that your disposition is easy to get along with? You like camp-meetings and religious services, and glory hallelujahs: are you mean and selfish in your private life? "Oh, as to that, I do not know, sir." Well, don't you sing one single song. For, when victory is to be registered, where you are to look for growth in grace is in the substantial ripeness that is in you. What is it that you are ripening? Rushes, toad-stools, all manner of rank and poisonous herbage in the dank bottom lands? Is it these things that you are ripening? Where are the heaven-climbing vines that run up from the garden of your soul? Where is the sweet passion-flower? Where are the clusters of Eshcol grapes? These other things may be better than nothing, but they are not the things which are evidence of growth toward the kingdom of God. It is meant that the power of the spiritual man should dominate over the animal man. Therein are the signs and tokens of victory.

There are some who suppose that when a man goes through conversion it is a clean sweep, and cuts off all the old man once and forever: that, to be sure, you must watch to keep down any sprouts that may start up; but that in the main the thing is scotched. If that be so there are very few people converted in this world. To my observation, and as I read the Bible, we enter upon a warfare, we begin a campaign, when we become Christians. Conversion is enlisting; it is just entering upon the work; and that work upon which you enter is yet to be accomplished.

One step beyond this. The condition of every man is to

be determined by what he is bringing forth. I have said that overcoming all the forms of evil in a man is one sign that he is doing well; but what is his condition as to actual fruitfulness in good? You will recollect that under the figure of fruit the apostle speaks of "the fruit of the Spirit," which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control [translated *temperance*]: against such there is no law." Now, you will observe that the magisterial graces, dictatorial conscience, all those sterner qualities which are so much insisted upon in our time, and which are not to be despised, are nevertheless not ranked high here.

When you are in the midst of a neighborhood which is full of all manner of vermin and beasts, and you would rear a garden, what is the first condition? It is that you shall make a fence or wall, and that it shall be pig-proof and bull-proof—that it shall be a fence or wall that no strength can pull down, and no cunning root up. A man who is going to live a Christian life must have conscience enough to ward off all evil that is around about him. But suppose that he should stop with this fence or wall?

Here a man has two acres enclosed for a garden. There is not a fruit tree nor a vine nor a flower there. What is there? There are gravel walks all around the enclosure; and every one is exactly straight, and comes around to just where it started from, and leads into the house. What sort of a garden is that? Suppose the man should call you out, and say, "My neighbor over there is a very dangerous man. He will lead you away by all manner of phantasms and fooleries. He has a garden; and such a garden! It has nothing around it but a little three-foot wall; and my wall is fifteen feet high. His wall measures only eighteen inches through, and mine measures three feet at the bottom, and tapers at the top." "Well, what have you inside of your wall?" "Beautiful walks. Every man can see just where he is stepping. You can go on that side right down to the corner, exact; and you can go right down to the corner on the other side, exact, without any mistake. Every thing is exact—no more, no less. And you can walk through as many times as you have a mind to." He thinks because his walks are so broad,

because his wall has such deep foundations, and is so high that a bird hardly dare fly over it, and because everything is so exact, that it is splendid. Well, conscience built it, and it is not to be wondered at that it is exact; but there is nothing in it that would make any one, entering it, want to stay. I can find you prison walls as good as his.

Here is the other man's garden. His wall, I admit, is rather low—so low that the raspberries and blackberries put their long lush branches over so that the cows browse on them; so low that many an apricot, and peradventure many a peach, is within the reach of the hands of the boys on the outside; so low that many a wayfarer, many a traveler, many a stranger, passing by, says, "I, too, can pick off these fruits. I do not need to be the owner of this garden to enjoy its bounty." Go inside of the wall. The garden is not laid out with much exactness; but there is not an inch of it that is not full of sweet smelling herbs, strange grass, all sorts of bulbs, rare flowers, and every device. There are leaves as beautiful as flowers, and more various. There is everything for the taste, and everything for the eye. The garden swarms with its abundance so that the midnight prowler may fill his pockets from night to night, and the owner not miss what he takes. Out of it come presents for the sick, remembrances for friends, and all sweet and excellent things; and the man of the great four-square garden stands and looks on, and says "Ugh! courting popularity. Ah! worldly, worldly. My garden is not like that." No, it is *not* like that.

Now, I hold that in spiritual husbandry the question of what you are, and of how far you have grown, is to be determined not by any artificial physical signs or evidences. The question is, How fruitful are you? Will you let me shake your bough? The fruit of the Spirit is love. Nothing comes down. You have none to spare. The fruit of the Spirit is joy. Nothing. The fruit of the Spirit is peace. Nothing. The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering. Nothing. How long have you been a Christian? "Thank God, about twenty years." The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance. What do you say the fruit of the Spirit is? "Confession of faith; catechism; orthodoxy;

dogma; sound words and great exactness; conscience for and readiness to defend the faith once delivered to the saints." Defend it? "Yes; let a man attack it: I would like to see him." I shake the boughs, and not one single fruit of the Spirit falls; but there are ever so many artificial fruits that the Spirit never knew, and that were never begotten of it. Now, are you growing so?

Men and brethren, do you suppose if I had in a large gardener's pot an orange tree in full blossom, fifteen feet high, wide, of symmetrical proportions from the top to the bottom-most bough, full of buds, full of blossoms, full of green fruit, full of half-ripe fruit, and full of luscious golden oranges—do you suppose if I had such a tree, and I carried it through a narrow street, I would be obliged to put a label on it—"This is an orange, and it is fragrant"? Do you suppose there would be a man, woman or child that, on seeing the tree, would not know what it was, and that it was fragrant? Does it not carry its own fragrance? Does some stately Queen of Sheba, walking down the street, need to wear a label on which are spelled out the words, "I am handsome"? Are not ten thousand lyrics sung for her? Does she not carry on her face and in her majestic demeanor evidence of what she is? And is grace in the heart to be solved by many elaborate propositions? The soul's transit across the Sun of Righteousness—must that have men going to the ends of the earth to get a measurement of it, as men go to get a measurement of the transit of Venus across the natural sun?

If a man has the fruit of the Spirit, it will be apparent. If you could get into this church a hundred families, every one of whom should be like a tree in autumn, full of fruit—full of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith—there would be no need of publishing it.

And are these the only fruits of the Spirit? The apostle says that the fruit of the Spirit is found in goodness and righteousness. Whatever is just; whatever is honorable; whatever is courageous; whatever is pure; whatever is right; whatever is genial; whatever is witty; whatever is sweet in reason; whatever is noble; whatever is clad in self-forgetful-

ness; whatever is full of peace and cheer; whatever makes a man radiant as the sun; whatever makes him, even in adversity, glow as a starry night; whatever makes manhood resplendent,—these things are the fruit of the Spirit.

Now, how much have you grown? How ripe are you? Is there anything on your boughs that is worth plucking?

The other element to which I wish to call your attention is that of spontaneity. It is a part of universal education; and it is just as true of every stage of religious life as it is of every other part of a man's life, that he comes to perfection step by step, and that a man's perfection in anything is known by this: that he is able to command the thing gained without any conscious effort. When a man begins to study arithmetic it is a puzzling matter of calculation, and he goes slowly, and he thinks of what he is about at every single step. When he runs up a long line of figures he is uncertain as to whether the result is true. But familiarity breeds ease; and there are many men to whom computation comes almost as easy as reading. I have known men who could take three or four columns and sum them up almost as fast as the eye could follow—a thing which seems incredible to me; for I am humbled in the presence of three rows of figures! Nevertheless, that is what men come to by attainment.

Now, in studying a language, no man has gained a knowledge of that language who thinks of what words he is going to use. They must come of themselves. No man is an arithmetician until he has such a familiarity with the elements of the science of arithmetic that they are a part of himself. No man is a musician who thinks of notes or keys. When a man is learning a tune he thinks of both; but the tune is never learned so long as he is obliged to think of these things. No man is an accomplished speaker who is being drilled in rhetoric or oratory in order to perfect himself in speaking. He will only be an accomplished speaker when he has been drilled so that his gestures and postures and tones shall become unconscious, and shall be a part of the man himself. No person is graceful who goes to dancing-school for the sake of polishing his manners, and who says, on going into a room, "Now, I recollect that the master said

I must do so and so." Nobody can be otherwise than awkward who thinks how he shall enter a room, and how he shall hold his hands. Thinking about how to hold one's hands, how to walk, or how to stand, is evidence of awkwardness.

Now, that which is true in philosophy, in science, or in business, is just as true in religion. No man is perfectly a Christian on any point who thinks of being a Christian on that point. Every true quality must be spontaneous in its action. Every grace must be so practiced that it shall be spontaneous. A Christian man may be put into a situation where he will be obliged to check himself, and say, "Hold your peace," to the lower passions; he may be obliged to say to pride, "Keep still;" he may be tempted, instead of being longsuffering, to be very short-suffering; he may have to brace himself up; but ordinarily a Christian grace should be so drilled by daily practice that it shall be no trouble for a man to abound in the fruits of the spirit, and that these fruits shall be harmonious, perfectly regulated among themselves, and steadfast.

Now, is there this evidence of spontaneity in you? Are you humble because you have subdued yourself to humility until it is your natural carriage? Are you meek because you have practiced meekness until you have forgotten it? Are you sweet-voiced because you have given your voice all drill in sweetness? Are you perfected in the Christian graces so that they are spontaneous? Is the first impulse of your nature generosity, large-mindedness, nobleness of demeanor? Is the condition of your soul such, whether in company or out of company, that it requires something extraordinary to throw you out of harmony into discord with yourself?

This subduing of special elements of Christian experience to spontaneity is one of the most important of the signs of growth. We are to be so conformed to the gospel as to always bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ—so that the life of Jesus shall always be manifested in us. It is this living always in the spirit and temper and mind of the Lord Jesus Christ that shows, not only growth, but ripeness.

Lastly, as one in the Christian life goes further and further on, that takes place in the soul which takes place in the cluster. Sour is the cluster all summer long; but it grows sweet when it grows purple. Sour is the apricot until the color on its cheek begins to change, and then it grows sweet. Sour is the persimmon even under the sun, but the frost turns it to sweetness. The quality of being ripe is the quality of being sweet. Now, as you grow older are you growing sweeter? Does the sun and do the frosts—do prosperity and adversity alike—develop the juices in you to sweetness? Does it change them to saccharine, and not to acid? Is sweetness the secretion of your soul? For, depend upon it, he who is preparing to fly and join the heavenly choir is one in whom all the variations and manifestations of the universal love-principle are developed toward perfection; and he who is acerb, crabbed, cross, hard, obstinate, exacting —tell me not about the years of his service. God's grace ripens men to peace, to beauty, to sweetness, to joy, and then transplants them to heaven.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that to us has been given the full summer of knowledge, and that we have been brought up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord. We rejoice that all the dearest thoughts going backward, associated with all that is most reverend to us, have been as connected with thee. We thank thee that thou hast granted unto us such instructions and such instructors, and that through so many years thou hast caused both the outward world and the home world, yea, and our inward experience, to testify of thee, until now the things which belong to thy kingdom are the noblest to us, full of fineness, and sweetness, and gladness, and peace. Thou hast not sent upon us frowns and darkness; thou hast revealed thyself unto us as the all-loving Father, and the wide realm through which time is moving, bearing its mighty burden of people, is the realm where thou dost shine full of warmth, and hope, and cheer, and blessed invitation. We beseech of thee that we may rise up into this blessedness of hope and cheer, and believe the words of comfort which thou hast spoken. May we be encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need. And we pray that we may not be so cast down or discouraged by our imperfection and our sinfulness as not to avail ourselves of the full fruition of thy love and grace. Thou hast ample pardon. The past is with thee as if it had not been; for thou hast promised to cast the memory of our sins as a millstone into the depths of the sea. Thou hast promised to forget, and never to make mention again of our transgression. We beseech of thee that in thy generosity, and in the magnanimity of thy grace made known and vouchsafed unto all, we may stand rejoicing and not trembling, or doubting, or fearing, but confirmed in the holy faith, and be steadfast and enduring unto the end, so that when darkness comes we may have inward light; so that sorrow, coming, may find itself changed under the light of thy glory into every color of the rainbow. Grant that we may under hardship find rising within us thy promised strength, so that in days of discouragement and despondency the Consoler may draw near—yea, that those who sit in the region and the shadow of death may behold the light as he advances. O thou that art set apart and made known; thou that dost make known to us the secret and intimate knowledge of the disposition of God; thou that thyself wert not ashamed to call thyself divine; thou that didst take upon thee human flesh though divine; thou that, though equal with God, didst humble thyself unto death, grant, we beseech of thee, that in the appreciation of thy great merit and goodness we may feel that we are saved, not by any virtue that is in us, but by the virtue which is in thee; not because of the nobleness of our dispositions, but because of the nobleness which thou art breathing in us by the blessedness of thy company. So transform us that more and more thou shalt see growing in us the likeness of thyself.

And we pray that thou wilt help all those whose feebleness is

great; who are taking but the first steps of Christian experience; and who have manifold conflicts with themselves and with surrounding circumstances. We beseech of thee that thou wilt clothe them with patience. Give them faith, give them hope, in thee. May they glory in the Lord. May they have borne in upon them a sense, not so much of their own attainment as of the goodness and the glory and the graciousness of him who has taken them, who has adopted them, and who will complete in them the work which he has begun, until they shall stand in Zion and before God.

We pray that thou wilt draw near to those who, called of thee, have been enrolled a long time, have been soldiers doing battle under the banner of Jesus; and in all their manhood, in all their conflicts with the world, in all the campaign of duty to which they are called, may they grow strong both by joy and by sorrow. Overcoming day by day, may they achieve many victories that shall be final, and may they behold in themselves the growing ripeness and preparation for the life that is to come.

We beseech thee that thou wilt grant to those who are old, standing already upon the other side and near to the river, that they may have all tokens of divine remembrance, of strengthening, and of solace. Grant that they may look back upon the unrolled past, and rejoice that it is over. May they not mourn over disappointments. May they not repine or murmur. May they believe and feel that the way in which they have walked is best; and, with eyes turned toward the future and lifted up toward the heavenly estate, may they rejoice before they enter the gate, and may the light of thy countenance fall upon them, and may their last days be days of light and hope and comfort.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all the members of this congregation whom thou hast afflicted, and that thou wilt teach them how to bear sorrow so that it shall be a gift of God to them. Grant, O Lord, when thy knife prunes them, that they may already discern the coming cluster—for thou dost prune that they may bring forth more fruit.

Strengthen, we pray thee, those that are weak. Lift up the heads of those that are bowed down.

We beseech thee that thou wilt interpret thyself to those to whom thou art coming in thick clouds of darkness, that they may not be afraid.

We beseech thee that thou wilt be near to all who are in embarrassment; who are over-burdened with care; and whose strength seems ready to fail. May they stand, not in their own strength, but in the strength of him who called them.

We pray that thou wilt bless all those who seek to spread the knowledge of Christ; all those who give their time and their love to those that are outcast and wandering. We pray that thou wilt teach those who are teaching, and that thou wilt bless those that are blessing. May all our schools, and missions, and the labors of love and charity which thou hast called forth, and to which thou art ministering, be guided of thee and sanctified, so that all the work which we perform may be not as unto ourselves, but as unto Him who

hath loved us, and who hath breathed into us something of his own Spirit.

We beseech thee that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all that are absent from us. We pray for those who are upon the great deep, that they may be preserved from wreck and storm, and from peril and disaster of any kind. Speed them to their distant haven. And watch over all that are far from their friends in other lands, and all that are separated from us, wandering in our own land. And we pray that thou wilt keep the absent, the one for the other; and be thou, O God, a Providence manifesting mercy in abundance toward all who put their trust in thee.

Bless those who are strangers in our midst. Grant that they may have such greeting of the Divine Spirit, and such sympathy and joy with this brotherhood, that it shall seem to them as though a home had been established for the wayfarer; and may they rejoice at least in the precious hours of service which they spend here, and thank God for a Sabbath indeed.

We beseech thee that thou wilt bless all the churches round about us, and all thy servants that minister in holy things. Prepare them for greater and yet greater usefulness. And oh, we pray, take away those things which separate thy people. Unite them more and more in confidence, in co-operation of labor, and in the sacrifice of love. We beseech thee that thou wilt breathe upon all our land a spirit of knowledge, of duty, of temperance, of God-fearing and of man-loving.

And we pray for a blessing, not only upon this nation but upon all nations of the earth. And we beseech thee that thou wilt hasten that glorious day when injustice shall prevail no more, when mercy and truth and love shall prevail everywhere, when men shall have learned to love as they have learned to hate, and when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT unto us, our Father, the signs of our approach to the celestial sphere. As men that out of the wilderness drawing near to the populous city, see fairer fields and sweeter gardens, and more skill and wealth, and rejoice exceedingly, so may we discern as we draw near to our Father's house the gardens of the Lord, and all flowers of promise, and all sweet fruits perfecting themselves. Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may not be so anxious for joy by the way as for a thorough work in righteousness. May it be our heart's desire to be equipped inwardly, that we may not be found wanting

when we rise to our true companionship; that we may walk with the spirits of the just made perfect; that we may be able to understand what they say, and to respond to the joyful beatings of their hearts in the other life; that we may not be afar off from thee, thou Sun of all Righteousness and ripeness; that we may be able to draw near, very near, yea, and to clasp thine hand, and to feel thine everlasting benediction upon our heads. Grant that we may have this ambition of piety, this joyful uprising and aspiration of all that is good within us to be better. Grant that when we shall have had enough of winter, enough of frost and of freezing, enough of spring and of summer; grant that when we shall have been as men in the field, hardened by the conflict into all manliness and endurance therein—grant that then we may have leave to depart and go home. O joyful hour! O blessed consummation! O wonderful word from thy sweet lip! O blessed Sufferer and Saviour! All the melody of the earth has not in it what that word has; and if we, with upturned faces, never losing the way for a moment, at last come and stand in Zion to hear thee say, with all bountifulness and love, "Well done," it is enough. That word of greeting has more joy in it than all the sorrow that we have gone through in life could countervail. How poor are we, for whom there are such riches waiting! How sorrowful are we, for whom there are such joys and harps mute awaiting our coming! Grant unto us, O Holy Spirit, a knowledge of what we are. Give us to know whither we are going, and what is the estate for which we are striving to prepare ourselves. Strike through these dull and opaque souls of ours the light of the other life—the spiritual life—that we may discern the crystalline glory, the joy, the love, the eternal fruition, that is there. And may we be ashamed of shrinking, ashamed of weeping, ashamed of bending down under burdens; and may we lift up our heads, and rejoice that our triumph draws nigh, which no man and no thing can take from us. The crowns and the scepters are ours. Ours thou art, O Lord God Almighty!

And to thy name shall be eternal praise. *Amen.*

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